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NEWSLETTER
Volume 4, Number 2

"When I stepped onto that road, I was thinking of my four-year-old daughter and my two-year-old son, and of generations unborn."....David Gaines, Nevada Test Site, '87

February, 1990
Editor: Bob Jellison

Nuclear testing: Engine of the Arms Race

"The United States strongly seeks a lasting agreement for the discontinuance of nuclear weapons tests. We believe that this would be an important step toward reduction of international tensions and would open the way to further agreement on substantial measures of disarmament." ....President Dwight D. Eisenhower, April 13, 1959.

"It is our conviction that ending all tests of nuclear weapons would become a major contribution to consolidating strategic stability and peace on earth. It is no secret that new, ever more perilous kinds and types of weapons of mass annihilations are developed and perfected in the course of such tests." ....Soviet General Secretary Gorbachev, 1985.

DOE's Oversight of Nuclear Facilities

This Thursday evening, Feb. 15th, the Department of Energy will sponsor a public meeting to discuss the effects of current and proposed nuclear activities at the nearby Nevada Test Site. The meeting will include a movie on nuclear weapons testing, and discussions of the off-site radiation monitoring program and the proposed high-level radioactive waste disposal site.

The DOE has recently been beset by numerous problems stemming from their mismanagement of the nationwide nuclear warhead production facilties. A few examples include:

- Hanford Nuclear Reservation: Shut down. The US General Accounting Office estimates 743,000 gallons of high-level waste leaked from a single ruptured tank into the groundwater. The DOE estimated leaked radiation would not reach the Columbia River for 175-180 years. After only 11 years, increased tritium levels were detected in the river. A reprocessing plant on-site was responsible for adding 4,000 curies of tritium a year to the river.
- Savannah River Reactor: Shut down. Plant operators were ill-trained to handle even routine tests. Poor operator training and operator attitudes along with unsafe reactor conditions led to its shut down in June 1988.
- Fernald Raw Material Processing Plant: Shut down. Recently fined for previously undisclosed radioactive releases to the air and ensuing cover-up. This is not over; recently wells near the plant are showing radioactive contamination.
- Oak Ridge Research Reactor: Shut down due to management deficiencies.
- Rocky Flats Plant, Colorado: Recently raided by the FBI to obtain documents relating to illegal diposal of hazardous wastes, illegal incineration of hazardous wastes, illegal discharge of hazardous chemicals, false statements, and concealment.

These are but a few of the recent examples in the ongoing endangerment of the public by facilities overseen by DOE and operated under the cloak of secrecy. We urge you to attend the public meeting and ask your own questions. Ask about the accidental atmospheric releases. Ask about the pattern of increased cancer rates downwind of the Test Site. And then ask why we are still developing and testing new nuclear weapons.

A Comprehensive Test Ban in 1990

A main objective of nuclear arms control advocates has always been to achieve a complete ban on the testing of nuclear weapons. While the Partial Test Ban Treaty of 1963 ended atmospheric testing, nuclear testing continues underground at the Nevada Test Site. This past year all of these tests have been for the purpose of developing new types of nuclear weapons, including earth-penetrating warheads and enhanced radiation nuclear warheads.

A comprehensive ban on nuclear weapons testing is more urgently needed than ever before. Previous arguments against a ban have all been discredited or are no longer valid due to political and technological advances.

A Comprehensive Test Ban:

- *would slow the arms race by making the development of newer and more dangerous weapons much more difficult.*
- *would reduce the likelihood of nuclear attack.* As new technologically superior weapons are developed, stability decreases, since the incentives for first strike are enhanced.
- *is verifiable.* Modern seismology and Soviet willingness to have US observers in their country have eliminated any arguments about verifiability.
- *only makes sense given the current negotiations for drastic reductions in our nuclear arsenals.*
- *will help our economy by freeing monies for education, civilian research, and other social expenditures.*
- *will help stop the spread of nuclear weapons to other nations.* In the Non-proliferation Treaty, 130 nations agreed not develop their own nuclear capabilites if the US and USSR agreed to negotiate a comprehensive test ban. This year these nations will meet again to decide if we are working towards a test ban. Many of these nations have indicated they may withdraw from the treaty due to our non-compliance.
- *would restore the U.S.'s position among the world as a moral leader on world peace.*

Let's end nuclear testing in 1990!

Come join us before the DOE presentation.

Potluck: Thur., Feb. 15, 5:30 at 16A Dixon Lane

DOE presentation: Feb. 15, 7:00 at Bishop Council Chambers

LEGISLATIVE REPORT AND ACTION ALERT

President Bush's Cold War Budget

It is simply no longer possible to imagine a cohesive Warsaw Pact, led by Soviet troops, forcing its way through the center of Europe in a masssive invasion of territory...I would urge that we consider and propose cuts far deeper than anything we have tabled so far. ...Richard Perle, former assistant secretary of defense under Reagan, January 25, 1990

Despite the dramatic changes in the world and a significant decline in the Soviet threat, the Bush budget still asks for a $7 billion increase in the FY 1991 Defense Budget. In recent weeks, past Secretaries of Defense have all testified before the Senate Armed Forces Committee that political reforms in Eastern Europe have eliminated any possibility of a Warsaw Pact attack against NATO. Yet the current defense budget calls for $150 billion to protect Western Europe.

Action request:

Write or call your representative and express your concern about the 1991 military budget. Compare the cost of uneccessary weapons systems with the proposed cuts in non-military government spending; education, health care, aid to the elderly, etc. Specific programs which will be considered for cuts include:

NATO support	$130 billion
B-2 Stealth	$5.5 billion
Star Wars	$4.7 billion
MX missile	$2.2 billion
Trident missile	$1.7 billion
Midgetman	$202 million
Chemical weapons	$141 million

A Budget Perspective

- We do not need more and newer nuclear weapons. The US has 22,500 total nuclear warheads. The Bush budget calls for spending billions on new generations of weapons while it neglects an entire generation of our youth.
- The Bush budget call for $2.2 billion for the MX rail garrison. Bush wants billions to build trains for MX missiles while he looks to cut funds for trains that carry human beings. His budget eliminates federal support for Amtrak and for mass transit programs in major cities.
- The Bush budget requests $4.7 billion for Star Wars (23% increase) to develop "brilliant pebbles" (missile interceptors) while offering an education budget that would edge up only one percent of the current level. We need brilliant students not brilliant pebbles.
- Bush's budget requests funds for heat-seeking missiles and cuts programs for heat-seeking human beings. His budget requests a 28% cut after inflation for the low income energy assistance program.

Our budget should represent our true national needs and not those of the defense contractors.

.....Council for a Livable World

Where to Write or Call

Senator Pete Wilson or
(202) 224-3553
Senator Alan Cranston
(202) 225-2915
Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Hon. Bill Thomas (Inyo)
(202) 224-3841 -or-
Hon. Richard Lehman (Mono)
(202) 225-4540
House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

World-wide actions to end nuclear testing in 1990

The American Peace Test is planning a large action at the Nevada Test Site, March 29 - April 2. Other actions will take place in the USSR, Europe, and across the US. We will discuss plans for this action at our March meeting.

DOE presentation on the Nevada Test Site
Bishop Council Chambers
Thur., Feb. 15, at 7:00 p.m.

Next SNAP Meeting
393 Mt. Tom Rd., Bishop
March 4 - 7:00 p.m.

Sierra Nevada Alliance for Peace
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